Doctor *BIRCH's*

SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

Houſe of Commons,

Novemb. 5. 1689.

Mercurii 6 Die Nov. 1689.

RESOLVED,

THAT *the Thanks of this Houſe be given to Doctor* Birch, *for the Sermon Preached before them Yeſterday at St.* Margarets VVeſtminſter; *And that he be deſired to Print the ſame; And that Sir* Thomas Clarges *do acquaint him therewith.*

PAUL JODRELL,
Cl. Dom. Com.

A

SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

Houſe of Commons,

November 5. 1689.

By *P. BIRCH*, D. D.

In the Savoy:

Printed by *E. Jones*; and are to be ſold by *W. Nott* in the *Pall-Mall*, and *R. Taylor* near *Stationers-Hall*. 1689.

A

SERMON

JOHN XVI. 3.

And theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor Me.

THIS is the Reaſon our Lord aſſigns of the Jewiſh Zeal againſt his Followers, why they put them out of their Synagogues, and thought whoſoever killed them, did God Service: And the Account ſo well agrees to their Succeſſors in the ſame bitterneſs of Spirit, that it can be no Immodeſty in us to aſcribe that Ignorance to a part, which Chriſt himſelf charges, for the ſame cauſe, upon the whole Viſible Church of God.

The Jews, at that time, had all the Advantages of Poſſeſſion; They had a

Church of God's own founding; One that had continued in a conſtant and viſible Succeſſion for many Ages: That had no need of the Modern Arts, to found its Doctrines on the Credit of a Dream, or caſt out Devils where Men were hired to be poſſeſt; but which had ſeen the Rod of *Moſes* ſtrike a Living Stream out of a Rock, and the Sea divided to give them paſſage and protection: One, which had the Oracles of God committed to it, and which truly ſate in *Moſes*'s Chair. And therefore for theſe Rulers of God's choſen People, the *High Prieſt*, and all the State of the *Elders*, to be charg'd with Folly, to ſee their *Statutes* and *Ordinances* in danger to be ſet at naught, and themſelves robbed of their Prerogative by a few illiterate Fiſher-Men, were Provocations that ſeem'd to juſtifie their Zeal, and make their Fury Religious. For to tell them, *They knew not God*; was next

to

to affirming, *He had left himſelf without Witneſs*: And, *To reject their Authority*; was to *Reſiſt the Ordinance of God*, who had ſaid, *The Prieſts Lips ſhall preſerve Knowledge, and the People ſhall ſeek it at their Mouths.*

But on the contrary, our great Prophet and Teacher, who *knew what was in Man*, and how little all theſe boaſted Privileges would avail in the ſight of God, plainly charges theſe Unnatural Heats upon their Ignorance; They knew not that a God of Mercy and Compaſſion excuſes no Wrath that is cruel, and that fierce Anger was not made for Man: They underſtood not how great the Preſumption was, to fancy his Cauſe needed the ſupport of their Sin; That nothing which is Evil and Injurious, can be made fit for our Election; and that no Intention is good, which puts us upon the choice of Ill Means. And for this Reaſon, to the end his Diſciples

ſhould not be offended, nor prefer Authority to Truth, does our Saviour here affirm, *Theſe things will they do unto you, becauſe they have not known the Father, nor Me.*

The Words are plainer than any Comment would make them; and they are deſigned, in their Firſt Intention, to arm the Holy Apoſtles againſt the Malice of their own Country-Men. They were the Firſt Perſecutors of Men, who believed in the ſame God with themſelves: For what we read of *Socrates*, *Anaxagoras*, and others, being condemn'd by the Court of *Areopagus*, was not for Worſhipping the Gods in a wrong manner, but for Contemning all. But in every Age we find the Jews Conſtant Promoters of the Heathen Cruelties: And if we may gueſs at the Reaſon of their Paſſion, by the firſt Spring of it, it does not ſeem to be a true Zeal for their Law, leſt the Chriſtians ſhould only

only change the Cuſtoms which *Moſes* delivered them, but rather an Indignation or Envy to be ſo much over-matched by their Glorious Works, and Excellent Abilities. St. *Luke* relates, *Act.* 5. That *by the Hands of the Apoſtles were many Signs and Wonders wrought among the People, then roſe up the High Prieſt, and they that were with him, and were filled with Indignation, and laid their Hands on the Apoſtles, and put them in the Common Priſon.* Afterwards when they could not ſilence theſe Witneſſes of our Lords Reſurrection, they *took Counſel to ſlay them,* and ſo literally fulfilled the Prædiction in the Text.

Verſ. 12.

Verſ. 17.

Verſ. 33.

But this is written likewiſe for our learning who come after; for no Prophecy of the Scripture is of a private or proper Interpretation; it ought not to be confin'd to that ſingle Occaſion upon which it was firſt uttered, but is a ſtanding Inſtruction for all the Succeeding Neceſſities of

of the Church. And therefore we who now celebrate a Deliverance, wherein this Scripture is fulfilled in our Ears, who labour under the like unjuſt Sentence, as the Apoſtles once did, and ſtill hear Murder called a Sacrifice unto God, may ſafely conclude, that the Admonition belongs to us of the Preſent Generation, no leſs than it did to them, who firſt received it; and though we have no great hopes it will convince Gain-ſayers, yet it may ſerve to fortifie our ſelves, and to make us all ſenſible of Gods Mercy, in ſo long eſcaping that Fury, which firſt made Jewiſh Zealots and then Chriſtian; which particularly inſpired the Conſpirators of this Day, and which we have reaſon to Fear, was not buried in their Graves, but will be always urging to the like Attempts.

For which Good Purpoſes, I ſhall endeavour ſome account,

1. Of

1. Of the Falſeneſs of that Principle, upon which theſe Violences are generally built, namely, That they are Deſigns for God, and Hallowed by their being ſo.

2. Of thoſe Miſtakes which corrupt and miſguide our Zeal to intemperate Degrees. And,

3. We may reflect on that wonderful Act of God's Providence, in ſo eminently protecting us, and the Gratitude we owe Him, who ſo does His *Marvellous Works*, that *they ought to be had in Remembrance*. And,

I. If we enquire what it was, which ſo far tranſported the Jews againſt the Holy Apoſtles, we ſhall find it none of the *weighter Matters of the Law, Judgment or Mercy*, for theſe the Apoſtles obſerved better than themſelves; but that which inflam'd their Zeal, was *Traditions of their own*, the *Commandments of Men*, and *not of God*. And of this our Saviour con-

convinces them, *Matth.* 15. in an eminent inſtance; They had a cuſtom of Devoting their Goods by Vow; this the Phariſees adjudged Obligatory, though a Father were in want, and ſo made the Vow take place of the Commandment; now it is hardly imaginable, how they came to prefer this mad Practice to ſo plain and natural a Duty, but that our Lord inſinuates the Reaſon, The Vow was of their own deviſing, and that made them ſo fond of it.

Here then we have a plain diſcovery, what makes our Zeal intemperate; it is that which makes every Affection ſo, the being *Lovers of our ſelves*, and leaning to our own Underſtandings; for this never fails of making us ſeek to impoſe upon other Men; one effect of which always is, that we proportion not our diſpleaſure to the weight of the things contended about, but to the oppoſition we meet with; and

and this eaſily leads us into a Fond Belief, that the Goodneſs of the Intention will ſanctifie our Exceſſes. It was St. *Paul*'s own caſe whilſt he liv'd a *Phariſee*, he ſays, *Act.* 26. That *he verily thought with himſelf he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jeſus of Nazareth*; and yet we never find this pleaded as a Juſtification of his Fact; but though he *obtained Mercy* becauſe he *did it ignorantly in Unbelief*, yet he ſtill confeſſes himſelf to have been *a Blaſphemer, and a Perſecutor, and Injurious*; and he afterwards pronounces, That *whoſoever does Evil, that Good may come, his Damnation is juſt.*

Verſ. 9.

1 Tim. 1. 13.

The Reaſon of this Declaration we find to have been a Slanderous Report, that he held the contrary: And it ſeems to have been a Calumny upon our Saviour himſelf; for before his Expoſition of the Decalogue, *Matth.* 5. he forewarns his Fol-

Rom. 3. 8.

lowers, That they ſhould not *think he came to deſtroy the Law and the Prophets*; and the following words ſhew the great
Verſ. 8. Reaſon he had to do ſo; *For verily I ſay unto you, till Heaven and Earth paſs, one jot, or one tittle, ſhall in no wiſe paſs from the Law, till all be fulfilled.* This is ſpoken of the Moral Law, for the Ceremonial ceas'd at his coming, and the Judicial was of no force but in the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*; and the profeſſion is of abſolute Neceſſity to the receiving of the Goſpel: For if that were not agreeable to the Common Principles of Good and Evil, implanted in us already, we could have no ſufficient Motive to obey it; becauſe the ſame God, who is the Author of our Faith, is alſo Author of our Reaſon; and gave us that to judge of our Faith by; ſo as for him to evacuate any Moral Command, is to contradict himſelf. To ſay there may be new Rules of Juſtice,

ſtice, Temperance or Fidelity, is no better ſenſe than that there may be a new Truth in a Neceſſary Propoſition: For the Law written in our Hearts was at firſt given us to guide Mankind to the End of his Creation, and therefore muſt be as Immortal as our Nature: That which was reſtored by the Sanctions of Chriſtianity, was this very Law, and as ſuch, it was received by the World.

And it could not be received upon any other account: For the Learned part of the World was before inſtructed, that *True Religion and Undefiled* was ever the ſame, only Time, and the Neceſſities of Men, have varied it in the manner of expreſſing it. It was always true, That God is the moſt Excellent Being in Himſelf, and the greateſt Benefactor to us; and therefore to love and ſerve him out of a prevailing ſenſe of his Goodneſs, was always to be Religious; and *he that in*

every Nation thus *worked Righteouſneſs, was accepted of him.* So likewiſe in the Duties relating to one another, the Reaſon of them never changes, though the Laws vary which are built upon it: We muſt, for inſtance, live in ſome Society or other, becauſe one part cannot ſay to another, *I have no need of thee*; and therefore we are bound for our own good to all thoſe Duties by which Societies are ſupported. We may all want our Neighbours Aſſiſtance, and therefore ought in good Reaſon to ſupply him in his turn: If we do not our Neighbours Juſtice in their Poſſeſſions, we cannot long expect to be ſafe in our own. And in all theſe caſes, it is Equity and Right Reaſon which makes the Law Obligatory, though that determines the particular Act. The common Reaſon of Mankind obliges us not to invade one anothers Property, but it is the Municipal Law

Law of the Country which teaches us what it is to do ſo, by defining what ſhall be eſteem'd Theft, Murder, or Adultery. When therefore we find Conſtitutions to vary, this is not an Alteration in the great Fundamental Principles of Reaſon, but it ariſes from the different Circumſtances Men are under; or at moſt, only proves that one Body of Men is not ſo wiſe as another.

And for this cauſe, the old Chriſtian Apologiſts, who beſt underſtood the Things they wrote about, did not begin their Method of Converſion where the Modern Controvertiſts do, by trying the ſtrength of a Mans Faith, and gageing his Credulity by firſt propounding of a Myſtery: But they repreſent the Doctrine of Chriſt as an higher and a more excellent Improvement of Morality than ever was before: They deny not that the ſame Virtues are found in the Heathen Moraliſts

liſts which are in the Chriſtian; but they affirm theſe are better taught, and encouraged by more certain Promiſes of an Eternal Reward. As for the Powers now claimed, to give away Heretical Kingdoms, to diſpenſe with the Faith of Treaties, to commit Maſſacres in cold Blood, and the like Works of Darkneſs, theſe were never thought a part of Religion; and had they been ſo, this alone had been a ſufficient Conviction that it was not from God. And therefore we need not wonder, that thoſe Unbelievers, who border on Chriſtians that teach ſuch things, continue in their Infidelity: For ſo far as they believe theſe a part of Chriſtianity, ſo far they are in the right not to own it; and there is no way to convince them, but by ſeparating this Corruption from the Truth of the Goſpel.

In a word, there muſt be ſome defect in every Action that thwarts the Original

nal Deſign of all Religion: And though we cannot always ſee the Deficiency of a Cauſe, yet we may be ſure there is one, where-ever the product is bad; and conſequently whatſoever Paſſion hurries us on to Actions of Fraud or Injuſtice, it can be no part of the *Wiſdom from above*, or an effect of ſaving Knowledge, but of the blindneſs of our Minds, as our Saviour declares in the Text.

II. It was next propounded to conſider, How Men come to be miſled into ſo groſs and palpable an Error, and by what Steps and Degrees their Zeal becomes ſo intemperate. Now the Zeal we have either for or againſt any thing, does evidently depend upon the Judgment we make of it, and conſequently it is perverted whenever it is ill placed, and muſt neceſſarily err when it hath not Knowledge for its Guide: So that to recount all the Errors that miſlead our Affections

fections were an endleſs Task, becauſe they are as numerous as the ways by which we come to be miſtaken. In general, every inordinate deſire is able to make our Zeal ſo, and at the ſame time perſuades us we do well to be angry: Pride, Covetouſneſs, or Ambition, or whatſoever rules the Man, and carries the main of our Actions after it, preſently calls down *Fire from Heaven* to devour the Adverſary, and proclaims Hoſtility againſt all that hinders our Enjoyment.

But there are two ſpecial Cauſes of theſe dreadful Effects, which ſeem to outmatch all the reſt: The one is, the reſigning up of our Paſſions to the diſpoſal of other Men; and the other is a belief of ſecret Impulſes, and immediate Inſpirations. And,

I. The greateſt Number of Zealots are never at the pains of a Rational aſſent, by

by themſelves examining the Motives of their Opinion, but they are moved purely from without, and ſo are the miſerable Subjects of other Mens Exceſſes: They firſt deny Reaſon its Native Right, and then chuſe their Faith without its guidance, till by having Mens Perſons in admiration, they are brought into their power to be abuſed at pleaſure. It is this giving poſſeſſion of our Underſtandings that hath in all Ages made Diviſions of ſo quick a growth: We all know there muſt be Hereſies, and that they are no more ſtrange in the State Eccleſiaſtical, than Mutinies in an Army, or Rebellions in a Kingdom: For none of all theſe Bodies conſiſt only of good Members, and the bad will be always diſturbing them. But this ſort of Quarrels would be ſoon the more harmleſs, if Men would but judge for themſelves, and not be at the Mercy of every bold Seducer.

None would be tempted by that reſtleſs Ambition of being Head of a Party, unleſs the World afforded Fools to follow him, and that he expected the Fierceſt Maintainers amongſt thoſe who examined him leaſt.

Perhaps this is one Reaſon why the hotteſt Diſputes have begun about the moſt trivial Matters; becauſe to deceive the hearts of the ſimple, there is always to be made a pretence of ſome peculiar Excellency; but that is not ſo eaſily form'd in the plain neceſſary Duties, as it is in Niceties of Opinion. And therefore we may obſerve the Controverſies about the Commandments to have been all along the feweſt: We never read of a Schiſm or a Perſecution in behalf of Morality; for to force Men to do Juſtice, and remember Mercy, would ſooner create Enemies than Admirers; and beſides, there are few buſie Spirits at leiſure to mind

mind ſuch common Attainments. But if any dare oppoſe what a Leading Man thinks fit he ſhould believe; if his Creed conſiſts not of the ſame Number of Propoſitions, and he is bold enough not to be brought under Bondage to any, then he is preſently voted a Malefactor, let it be in a great Matter or a ſmall. Thus the whole Body of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches fell out, and ſeperated about the time of keeping their *Eaſter*; chiefly becauſe *Victor* Biſhop of *Rome* had leſs humility than his Predeceſſors, and found the Pre-eminence of his Church worth the conteſting for; The Eaſtern again fell out among themſelves about the uſe of Images; and to complete the folly, we of the Weſtern are devouring one another, for things in the greateſt part of which our Faith is not concerned.

This indeed hath not always been due to the Blindneſs, but to the Treachery of

Guides; they have always ſtole ſomething or other in the Scuffle: And for this we need no other Arguments, than to obſerve the ſeveral Cruſades and holy Wars that have been ſet on foot for Domeſtick Reaſons. But there is one Injuſtice we ſtill continue to the Memory of thoſe Times, we admire them who were Learned in theſe Controverſies, and managed them for their Profit, who had more Wit and leſs Honeſty than themſelves, whilſt we forget to pay Reverence to thoſe only wiſe and good Men, who ſcorn'd to be the Inſtruments, and ſo died peaceably, without Recording their Follies.

And if this Diſeaſe was ſo far advanced under the Primitive Integrity, how much have we to fear in theſe ſtill more perilous Times? Never certainly was ſo ſtrong a Deluſion, as to believe the Infallibility of a ſingle Perſon, and a preſent

ſent Teacher againſt all the Principles of Reaſon, and Evidence of our Senſes: No wonder the Obedience of ſuch Votaries is blind, and that in the Arts of Revenge they come at length to be as Spiritual as their Leaders. For without this putting themſelves into other Hands, one would think it impoſſible to find Men ſo hardned againſt all Compaſſion, as to attempt the Murdering of a Kingdom in its Repreſentatives. It would be uncharitable to believe it, were not the Actors ſeiz'd in the attempt, their Materiels ſeen and expoſed, and Confeſſion made by themſelves at their Deaths: The Apology alſo, *That they were a few Malecontents, who grew deſperate upon Perſonal Provocations*, might ſeem plauſible, but that no Injuries were then pleaded, and their own dying Words gave Teſtimony that it was Religion alone which encouraged them. And indeed it looks too much

like

like the Action of a Party, becauſe they have ſo often fallen into the like practiſes in other Countries, witneſs all that innocent Blood which hath been ſhed in our Neighbor-Nations, with almoſt as little warning as this would have been. But nothing better is to be expected where the Scriptures are denied, and the People hear of no other Morals but what theſe Guides will teach them.

II. There ſeems little need of External Encouragements, ſo long as that terrible Motive continues in the World, the belief of immediate Inſpirations, and that Men are extraordinary Inſtruments of God's Judgments by a ſecret Impulſe; for this is eaſily taken up, and only wants Confidence to manage it. The Pretenders to this, firſt form'd themſelves into a Sect amongſt the Jews, and they gave ſo dreadful an Example of an enraged Zeal, that one would think it a ſufficient warn-

warning to all after-Ages to beware of its Tranſports: The Hiſtorian tells us of theſe Zealots, that under pretence of imitating Men of Heroical Impulſes, they committed all kinds of Rapine and Murder upon their own People, that by their mad defence of the Temple they deſtroyed it, and that their inteſtine Quarrels more contributed to the enſlaving of their Country, than all the Arms of its Enemies.

This perhaps may be called an extraordinary Caſe, and a part of that Vengeance which the Jews drew upon them and their Children by their Crucifying the *Lord of Glory*: But the Chriſtian Story likewiſe informs us of the like Calls from Heaven, there we meet with impulſes to Murder, Sacriledge and Adultery, and with Men of that reprobate Senſe, as to Glory in their Shame. It was not only *Montanus*, who had his *Paraclete*, but all the greateſt Corrupters of Chriſtianity have

have alſo pretended to Divine Inſpirations; moſt of the Romiſh Errors have grown into a part of their Faith, by the like Artifices; they could not always argue Men out of their Money and Senſe together, but they could fright them into the Snare, and find out Men who had Forehead enough to tell who they ſaw in Purgatory, and what Communion they had with Saints and Angels. It were happy alſo, if the Emiſſaries of that Church had never ſown the like Enthuſiams in ours, and that they found not their account in putting thoſe out of the reach of Conviction, who are deluded by them. As for us, who ſuffer by theſe pretended Gifts of Gods Spirit, we ſhould beware of the other Extream, the denial of his ſaving Graces, and guard our Faith againſt ſuch Deluſions, as tend to render that tremendous Article of Gods Grace, a Subject of unprofitable Talk.

III. Ha-

III. Having thus attempted to ſhew the Falſeneſs of that Principle, upon which the Enemies of the Truth have perſecuted its Profeſſors, with the chief Miſtakes which lead Men into it; it remains in the laſt place, to apply this to the Circumſtances we are under, and make that ſober uſe of the Admonition for which it was intended. The Context informs us, that our Lord ſpake theſe things, to the end his Diſciples might not be offended and fall, but when the time either of Tryal or Deliverance came, remember he had told them of it: This likewiſe is the end of all theſe Publick Commemorations, that we may keep the great Goodneſs of GOD in remembrance, and mention it with Honour, and a Diſtinguiſhing Obſervation. And,

1. We are not to let theſe remarkable Events paſs over our Heads without

out Obſervation, but to regard the *Works of the Lord*, and *the Operation of his Hands. His ways are ſought out of all thoſe who have Pleaſure therein, whilſt the Wicked will not ſeek after God, nor is God in all his Thoughts.*

There is an Art of God no leſs in Governing the World, than in Creating it; and to meditate upon it with a due Reverence, was anciently eſteem'd a Mark of Piety, and the principal part of their Worſhip. But in what Rank ſoever we now place the Duty, it certainly puts the trueſt and beſt Difference between Man, and *the Beaſts that periſh*: Their Senſes are as quick as ours, and for ought we know, they argue as right as our ſelves, ſo far as concerns the Action of their Life; but it is Man alone who is enabled to look up to the Firſt Cauſe of all, and by the viſible Things of Creation and Providence, to find

find out the great Creator. This alſo is the moſt Valuable Diſtinction between one Man and another: One grows wiſe enough by Experience to chuſe the Good, and refuſe the Evil; the Other ſeeth many Things, and obſerveth not: One hath his Senſes exerciſed, and grows up to a perfect Man; the Other hath no depth of Conſideration for any thing to take root in, and ſo never brings any Fruit to perfection.

It is indeed far above the beſt of our Capacities to ſee the Reaſon of all Divine Proceedings: *His Way*, ſays *David, is in the Sea, his Paths in the great Waters, and his Footſteps are not known*: Many Occurrences, big with Wonder, and rare Accidents, do, like the troubled Water, cloſe up again, and their way is not ſeen. But this is one of the Difficulties which was intended to quicken our Diligence; We are not diſcou-

raged from the Labours of the Field, becauſe we know not how the Plants encreaſe, and how their Seeds come to open into ſo curious a variety of ſhape and colour. No Man refuſes to eat, becauſe he knows not how his Meat is aſſimilated: And we ceaſe not to boaſt our Knowledge, though we cannot explain the common Works of Nature, how the Moon knows her certain Seaſons, and the Sea its Tides. And therefore we who believe it, may, without any preſumption, go on to ſtudy that Providence which is too wonderful for us: And that we may not judge amiſs, give me leave to mention only theſe two obvious Rules.

The firſt is, to weigh the Judgments of God by their End and Deſign; and the next, to conſider their dependency upon one another, and how each particular concurs to make up the Beauty of the

the whole. For, although we are but of yeſterday, and know nothing, yet we are certain, where an infinite Wiſdom is concerned, there can be no room for chance; and that where this directs, thoſe things are beautifull in their Seaſon, which alone looks like Deformity. They ſeem'd very odd Means of his Advancement, to have *Joſeph* firſt hated of his Brethren, then ſold into a ſtrange Country, and there unjuſtly caſt into Priſon; and yet, without every one of theſe Misfortunes, he had never been brought into *Pharoah*'s Preſence, and ſaved his Fathers Houſe. It is to ſuch bold Tranſgreſſions as were this Day attempted, that we owe the Laws which preſerve us; and it was to the Violence of thoſe who would have Rooted out at once our Liberties and Religion, that we owe the Preſent Eſtabliſhment of both; had the Enemies of

our

our Holy Profeſſion been contented to lead us Blindfold into the midſt of *Samaria*, a great part of us had never opened our Eyes, and ſeen the Danger; but every Advance of theirs, help'd on our Deliverance, and encreas'd the Triumphs of this Happy Day.

If then we have ſeen the Hand of God in protecting his People, and that never any put his Truſt in the Lord, but he did deliver him; if we have ſeen him puſle the Wiſdom of the Wiſe, and overturn them in the midſt of their Strength: Theſe are Experiences that deſerve our Regard, and that ſhould give us a ſtrong Confidence in GOD, who hath done ſo great Things for us.

2. Laſt of all, We are to act conformably to thoſe Sentiments which a due Eſtimation of theſe Benefits inſpires us with, and ſo to make what Retribu-

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tion we are able. We indeed cannot properly be ſaid to Recompence the Almighty, becauſe we have nothing but what we have received from him: But he is pleaſed to declare, That *He who offereth Him praiſe, honours Him*; and therefore we are bound to pay theſe Praiſes due, in ſome proportion, to the Mercies we enjoy.

There is a natural Equity, that where the benefit is Publick, the acknowledgement ſhould be ſo too; and therefore, ſince the Bleſſings we now Commemorate, were extended to the good of Society, and make Kingdoms Happy, we are bound to Praiſe God with the Multitude; and to enter only into our Cloſets, would be interpretatively to Contemn him before the Congregation. Man was not made a Sociable Creature for every thing elſe, but the Acts of his Religion, and all Nations have ever made

made their VVorſhip as Solemn as they could; although they differed in the Objects of it; if we reſpect that which God ordained, the Religion of the Jews was perfectly National, and the Unity of the Chriſtian Church, as well conſiſts in one Viſible Communion, as it does in one Common Faith; for elſe there could be no Schiſm without Apoſtacy.

If therefore we are oblig'd to a Publick Homage in the ordinary Acts of our VVorſhip; much more when we come to honour GOD not only as our Common Parent, but as the Father of our Country; as He that hath divided us from the Nations round about, as well in Happineſs as in Scituation; who hath not given us over to the VVill of our Enemies, but hath ſtill confounded their Devices, and kept the Simple by their Right; whoſe Hand is not yet ſhortned, that it cannot ſave; but who can

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make our Happineſs as the ſtrong Mountains, that all the Storms of Envy and Malice ſhall break againſt it.

Above all, To the Praiſes of our Lips, we ſhould add the Obedience of our Lives; and ſo raiſe our ſelves up into his Protection, who is the hope of all the Ends of the Earth. We are not thus wonderfully delivered out of our Diſtreſs, to add Sin to Sin, and to make God's Benefits the Inſtruments of his Diſhonour: It is not to practiſe thoſe Crimes our Selves, which we condemned in others, but to be a People Zealous of Good Works, and to bring forth Fruit unto God. There is ſo general a Corruption of Manners, and our Diſcipline is ſo far loſt, that it's a Task worthy the Wiſdom of this Auguſt Aſſembly to find out the Means of its Reſtauration, and to keep up the Bank againſt that Flood of Wickedneſs which is viſibly

breaking in upon us. In particular, I hope there is that Generous *Engliſh* Spirit left among us, that will not ſuffer our Common Mother to be torn and vilified, till we come to a Contempt of all things Sacred: If we once loſe the Encouragements of our Learning, and the Diſtinction of our Orders: If that Noble Proviſion which is made for our Education, be once neglected, and thoſe Schools of the Prophets be turned into little Seminaries, where Men forget that Modeſty is a Virtue, and learn to talk without thinking, we ſhall in a few Years ſadly find, that *Rome* will have none left to Oppoſe her.

This is not ſpoken to the reproach of any, but out of a deep ſenſe of our Folly, and an ardent deſire that we may not turn our Bleſſings into a Curſe. If therefore we would complete theſe Bleſſings, and tranſmit them down to a late Poſte-

Poſterity, the VVay is open, and the Means is certain: Let but our Vices diminiſh, and ſo will our Dangers; God will ſtill be our Mighty Saviour and Deliverer, and ſo lead us through Things Temporal, that we finally loſe not the Things Eternal.

Now to God, &c.

FINIS.